foreigners arrived in India in December 2008; down from 5.75 lakh the same period in 2007, thus, in December along, India lost about 50,000 foreign tourists-a drop of 9.2 per cent;

(b) whether Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA) growth, in whole of 2008 was half of its growth as it stood at 5.6 per cent compared to 2006 and 2007 when FTA grew by 12-14 per cent; and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken to boost foreign tourist arrivals?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA) : (a) As per the Tourism Satellite Account of India, the share tourism sector, both direct and indirect, in the country's GDP was 5.83%, and it accounted for 38.6 million jobs in the country, in the year 2002-03.

The number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India during December 2008 was estimated at 5.22 lakh, as compared to 5.97 lakh in December 2007, registering a decline of 12.5%. This decline may be due to various reasons including global financial meltdown and terrorist activities.

(b) The growth rate in FTAs in India in 2008 over 2007 was 5.6% as compared to 14.3% in 2007 over 2006.

(c) To boost FTAs in India, Ministry of Tourism, through its India tourism office overseas is undertaking a series of promotional activities. These activities include, advertising, participation in travel fairs, exhibitions, road shows, India evenings, seminars & workshops, Indian food and cultural festivals, publication of brochures, inviting media personalities tour operators and opinion makers to visit the country under the Hospitality Programme of the Ministry.

In addition, a "Visit India 2009" Scheme has been announced by the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with all stakeholders including airlines, hotels, tour operators, State Governments for incentivising travel to India during the current year.

Further, the Marketing Development Assistance (MDA) Scheme of the Ministry of Tourism has been expanded so as to provide financial assistance to service providers for the promotion of Medical and Convention and Conference Tourism in the country.

Promotion of Tourism Potential of AP

3602. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Andhra Pradesh is planning to have an active dialogue with global travel and tourism operators to promote tourism potential of the State;

(b) whether Union Ministry has also provided financial help and assistance to the State to improve tourist spots in the State;

(c) whether her Ministry has been working out picnic spots in various States and has agreed to give full assistance to the States to improve potential tourism in States; and

(d) if so, how much amount has so far been provided to States and to what extent it has given boost to improve tourism in India?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA) : (a) to (d) Development and promotion of places of tourists interests is primarily undertaken by the Governments/Union Territory Administrations. However, Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) on the basis of project proposals received from them, complete in all respects subject to availability of funds and *inter-se* priority every year under the following schemes:

(i) Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations/Circuits

(ii) Assistance for Large Revenue Generating Projects

(iii) Fairs/Festivals/Events

(iv) Information Technology

A total of 514 projects with an amount of Rs. 155307.55 lakh had been sanctioned to States/Union Territory Administrations during the first two years of the Eleventh Plan *i.e.* 2007-08 and 2008-09 for integrated development of tourism. The efforts of the Ministry of Tourism resulted in 5.37 million (provisional) Foreign Tourist Arrivals and USD 11747 million (estimated) Foreign Exchange Earnings in 2008.

Tourism Villages

3603. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to set up Tourism Villages at appropriate places to attract tourists;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA) : (a) to (c) Development and Promotion of Tourism including Rural Tourism is primarily the responsibility of State Governments/Union Territory Administrations concerned. Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance to the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for infrastructure development in rural sites having core-competency in art, craft, culture, handlooms/textiles etc. Community participation and capacity building including skill upgradation in such rural sites are supported through Government of India-United Nations Development Programmes Endogenous Tourism Project and Capacity Building for Service Providers Scheme of the Ministry.

So far 142 projects for Rs. 8742.70 lakh have been sanctioned for development and promotion of Rural Tourism in the country.

Tourism proposals from Karnataka

3604. SHRI RAJVEEV CHANDRASEKHAR : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state: